



# PCB Cleanup Proposed for Creek

## Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Site

Kalamazoo, Michigan

August 2011

### Informational meeting

The EPA is holding a public meeting **Thursday, Aug. 18**, to update the community about a proposed cleanup at the Portage Creek site. The meeting will start at:

6:30 p.m.

Radisson Plaza Hotel  
100 W. Michigan Ave.  
Kalamazoo

EPA representatives and other officials will make formal presentations and then be available to discuss the cleanup. If you need special accommodations at the meeting, contact EPA community involvement coordinator Don de Blasio (see below) by Aug. 11.

### Contact the EPA

For more information, or if you have comments about the Portage Creek cleanup, contact:

#### Don de Blasio

Community Involvement Coordinator  
EPA

77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590  
312-343-6666 weekdays,  
9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
deblasio.don@epa.gov

### Read the Documents

You may view site-related documents and files at the locations listed on Page 3.

### For more information

You can learn more about the cleanup online at: [www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/kalproject](http://www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/kalproject).

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency plans a \$15.8 million cleanup of PCB contamination in Portage Creek, scheduled to begin in late summer or early fall. The Agency considers this an immediate cleanup because of potential health concerns to people from direct contact with PCBs in the creek.

The EPA will have a public meeting (see box, left) to explain the cleanup, which could take two or more years to complete.

### Proposed cleanup

Workers will dredge sediment from Portage Creek, dig up soil immediately adjacent to the creek, stabilize creek banks to prevent future contamination and erosion, dispose of contaminated materials at a chemical waste landfill, and treat non-contaminated sediment and soil. Fences will be put up and signs posted to keep people from being exposed to PCBs during the cleanup. Once the contaminated material is removed, workers will test and monitor the area, fill excavated areas with clean material and topsoil, and plant native plants. EPA expects to remove about 17,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and sediment.

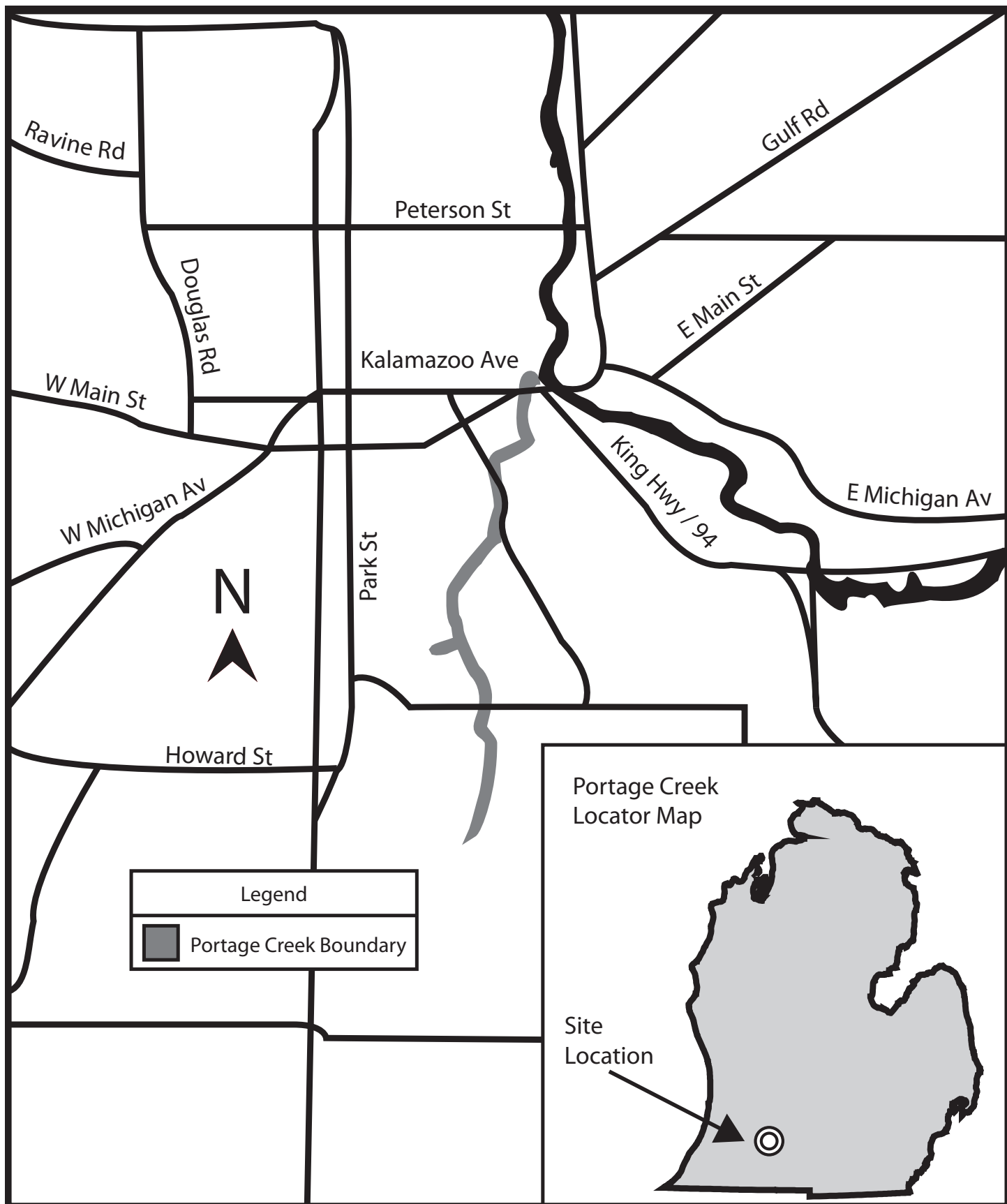
### Site history

The Portage Creek site begins at East Cork Street and follows the creek north about three miles to the Kalamazoo River (see map, Page 2). The site is bordered by residential, commercial and industrial properties, as well as undeveloped properties.

Between 1954 and the early 1970s, the site was used by several paper companies that recycled carbonless copy paper. The recycling process used PCBs, resulting in large amounts of contaminated waste upstream from the Portage Creek site. Until 1970, wastewater from the recycling process was released directly into a 29-acre pond within Portage Creek.

In 1977, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources issued a public health advisory regarding PCB contamination at the site, and advised residents not to eat fish caught from the creek. In August 1990, the Portage Creek site, as part of the Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund Site, was placed on the National Priorities List, a roster of the nation's most hazardous waste sites.

Between 1990 and 2000, several parties responsible for the contamination, including Georgia Pacific LLC and Millennium Holdings, investigated the Portage Creek site under an agreement with the EPA and the state of Michigan. In November 2010, the MDNR collected soil and sediment samples that showed high levels of PCB contamination.



## Information libraries

The public can read documents related to the Kalamazoo River Superfund site at the following places:

### **Kalamazoo Public Library**

315 S. Rose St.  
Kalamazoo

### **Charles Ransom Library**

80 S. Sherwood Ave.  
Plainwell

### **Allegan Public Library**

331 Hubbard St.  
Allegan

### **Otsego District Library**

219 S. Farmer St.  
Otsego

### **Saugatuck-Douglas Library**

10 Mixer St.  
Douglas

### **Waldo Library**

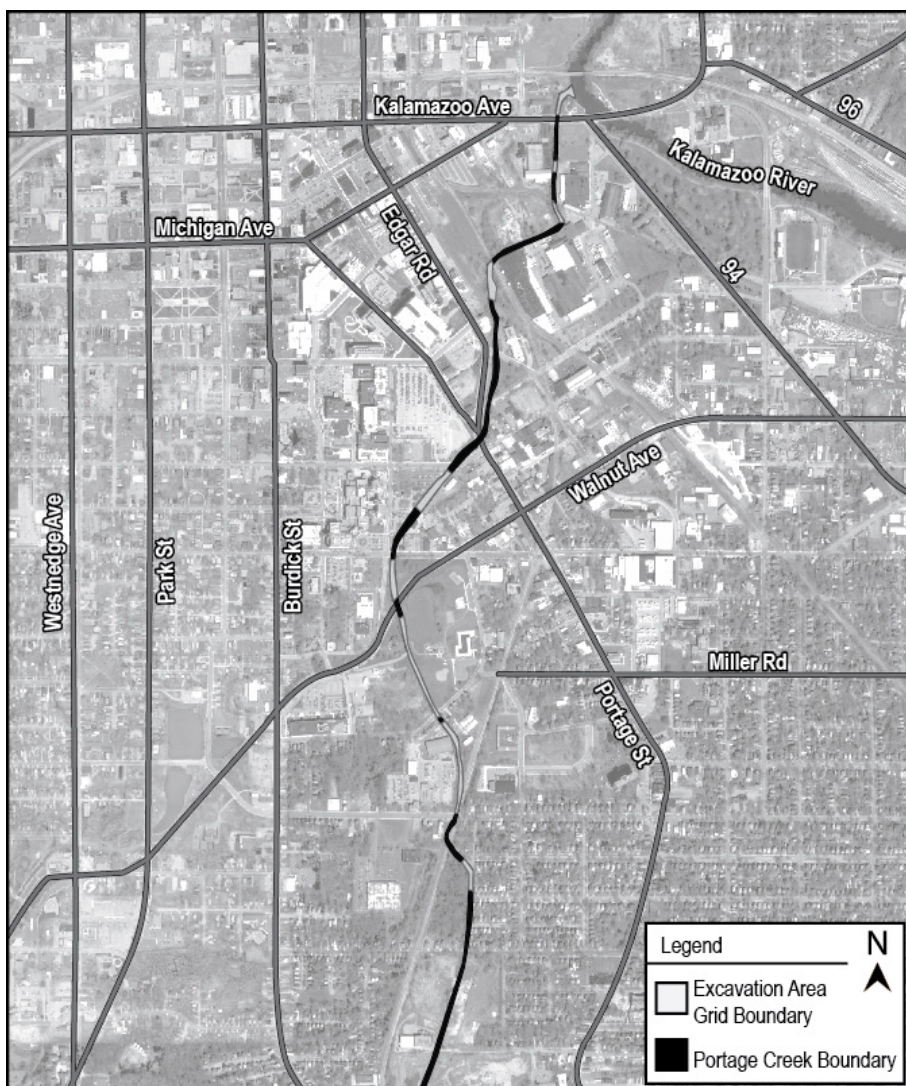
Western Michigan University  
903 W. Michigan Ave.  
Kalamazoo

## What are PCBs?

PCBs are a group of toxic chemicals that were produced in the United States between 1929 and 1978 for use primarily as industrial coolants, insulators and lubricants. PCBs were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications including carbonless copy paper – which contributed to the Kalamazoo River contamination – and many other applications because they were stable and resisted wear and chemical breakdown.

The same chemical properties that made PCBs useful to industry are now responsible for persistent levels of PCBs remaining in the environment, including the Kalamazoo River. PCBs last in the environment because they adhere readily to organic material in sediment and soil and tend to build up in the fatty tissue of fish and other animals. PCBs have been demonstrated to cause a variety of adverse health effects in animals. PCBs cause cancer and noncancer health effects on the immune, reproductive, nervous and endocrine systems. Studies suggest PCBs have similar effects on people.

The different health effects of PCBs may be interrelated, as alterations in one system may have significant implications for other systems of the body. The potential adverse environmental and health effects of PCBs were not well understood until 1977, when the government banned most uses of PCBs.



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Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Site  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
(details inside)

*This fact sheet is printed on paper made of recycled fibers.*

**ALLIED PAPER/PORTAGE CREEK/KALAMAZOO RIVER SITE:  
PCB Cleanup Proposed for Creek**

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FIRST CLASS

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Agency  
Region 5  
Superfund Division (SI-7J)  
77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

